

Aquinas the Voluntarist? An Investigation of the Claims of James Keenan, S.J.

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DANIEL WESTBERG observes that “one of the most fundamental and challenging problems in the interpretation of St. Thomas is the proper relationship of intellect and will, on which so much of moral theology (and thus of the *Summa Theologiae*) hinges.”¹ Indeed, one’s theology is radically dependent upon such fundamental philosophical principles. Rightly, then, Aquinas argues that the theologian must be concerned with *all* of the effects of God—even on the level of nature.² Because being is God’s proper effect,³ the relationship between being and the good (and, by extension, between the intellect and the will⁴) is a foundational consideration even for the theologian. Actually, the question of the relationship between cognition and volition in particular has far reaching implications for understanding the ideals of the moral life. For Thomas, the fact that “having reason is that which makes man to be a man” means “it is necessary that the good of man be to exist in accordance with reason.”⁵ It is, therefore, so foundational that one cannot be virtuous unless he live in accordance with it.⁶ In other

¹ Daniel Westberg, “Did Aquinas Change His Mind About the Will?,” *The Thomist* 58, no. 1 (1994): 41–60, at 41.

² See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* [ST] I, q. 1, a. 7, ad 1.

³ See, ST I, q. 8, a. 1, corp.; q. 45, a. 5 corp.

⁴ Being is the “proper object of the intellect” (ST I q. 5 a. 2 c.) whereas “good is the proper object of the will” (*De potentia*, q. 3, a. 15, ad 5).

⁵ *De virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 13, corp.: “Nam cum homo sit homo per hoc quod rationem habet, oportet quod bonum hominis sit secundum rationem esse” (all translations in the present article are my own).

⁶ Whereas the intellectual virtues are in the intellective part and are, therefore,

words, reason—and the activity of reasoning accurately about reality—is necessary for goodness. For authors such as James Keenan, however, the will's movement is “independent of and prior to reason”⁷ so one is able to be good and virtuous apart from any consideration of rightness because “goodness and rightness describe two different realities.”⁸

Keenan arises at the conclusions he does partially because he follows the thesis of Odon Lottin that the condemnation of intellectual determinism in the year 1270 led Aquinas to revise his teaching “in order to eradicate from it any idea of the will's being passive with regard to the intellect.”⁹ Although Keenan was certainly not the first to make this voluntarist thesis his own,¹⁰ he is probably the most influential and prolific¹¹ contemporary author to draw attention to it.¹² In fact, he was so captivated by the theory

necessarily connected with reason, the moral virtues are those which observe the mean that is *defined by reason* (see *ST* I-II, q. 64, a. 1, corp.).

⁷ James F. Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 1992), 47.

⁸ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 182. See also 38, 49, and 173, where Keenan argues “the defect in rightness does not affect the description of goodness.”

⁹ This concise summary of Lottin's position is from Rosemary Zita Lauer, “St. Thomas's Theory of Intellectual Causality in Election,” *The New Scholasticism* 28 (1954): 301. See: Dom Odon Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, vol. 1, *Problèmes de psychologie* (Louvain: Abbaye du Mont-César, 1942), 222; Lottin, “La preuve de la liberté humaine chez Thomas d'Aquin,” *Recherches de théologie ancienne et médiévale* 23 (1956): 323–30; Lottin, *Principes de Morale* (Louvain: Abbaye du Mont-César, 1946), 262; Lottin, *Morale Fondamentale* (Tournai, BE: 1954), 50–51; Lottin, “La date de la question dispute *De malo* de saint Thomas d'Aquin,” *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 24 (1928): 373–88. Finally, for Keenan's explanation of Lottin's theory, see his *A History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century: From Confessing Sins to Liberating Consciences* (New York: Continuum, 2010), 39–41.

¹⁰ Westberg provides a good overview of the history behind this theory in “Did Aquinas Change His Mind About the Will?” See also *The Collected Works of Bernard Lonergan*, vol. 1, *Grace and Freedom: Operative Grace in the Thought of Thomas Aquinas* (Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 2013), 96.

¹¹ In October of 2017, Keenan co-organized (with Cardinal Cupich) an event discussing the implementation of *Amoris Laetitia*—which exhortation he wrote about in “Receiving Amoris,” *Theological Studies* 78, no. 1 (2017): 193–212. He also wrote an influential article in *Theological Studies* (2015, Vol. 76 (1) 129–147) called “Redeeming Conscience.” For a brief explanation of the import of Keenan's relatively recent thought, see Richard A. Spinello, “Debate Continues over *Amoris Laetitia*,” *Crisis Magazine*, May 25, 2017, crisismagazine.com/2017/debate-over-amoris-laetitia.

¹² Actually, he seems to adhere to it with even greater tenacity than Lottin himself did. As Kevin Flannery, S.J., argues, Lottin actually seemed to be rather uncon-

that it became a central aspect of his dissertation (which was published in 1992 as *Goodness and Rightness in Thomas Aquinas's Summa Theologiae*)¹³ and a foundation of all of his work.¹⁴ With these facts in mind, his name has found its way even into the title of this chapter even though, in the final analysis, our primary endeavor is simply to discern what Saint Thomas's understanding was of the relationship between the intellect and the will in moral matters and whether or not he had any significant developments in this regard.

Before we engage some of the relevant texts from the Thomistic corpus, it may prove fruitful to explore the reasons Keenan was predisposed to embrace the thesis that Thomas ultimately espoused the Franciscan *formule volontariste*.¹⁵ To begin with, it is especially noteworthy that the situation ethicist Joseph Fuchs (who rightly has been said to have accepted "a modern voluntarist view of practical reasoning")¹⁶ had a strong influence on Keenan. Having heard many positive things about Fuchs during his studies at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Keenan went to Rome to study under his tutelage. He subsequently decided to write his dissertation under him as well.¹⁷ Keenan points out how ironic it was that even though the Vatican would not allow Fuchs to teach future priests, he was allowed to teach future moral theologians such as himself.¹⁸ This

vinced of the veracity of his own position (Flannery, *Acts Amid Precepts: The Aristotelian Logical Structure of Thomas Aquinas's Moral Theory* [Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2001], 115). Flannery demonstrates that either Lottin was rather unconvinced of the veracity of his own position or it was at least frequently in a state of flux. As he says, "Lottin's various disclaimers ensure that his position itself will always defy falsification, with the natural consequence that it also lacks a clear sense" (*Acts Amid Precepts*, 115). For this reason as well, Keenan's relatively consistent explication of the theory provides a more fitting foil for my own position.

¹³ See Keenan, *History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century*, 40–41 and note 29.

¹⁴ The third chapter of Keenan's *History of Catholic Moral Theology in the Twentieth Century* (35–58) is dedicated to Lottin.

¹⁵ See Lottin, *Psychologie et morale aux XIIe et XIIIe siècles*, 1:222, and Lauer, "St. Thomas's Theory," 299–300.

¹⁶ See Michael S. Sherwin, O.P., *By Knowledge and By Love: Charity and Knowledge in the Moral Theology of Thomas Aquinas* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 10.

¹⁷ See Keenan's introduction to Mark Graham's *Josef Fuchs on Natural Law* (Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2002), ix–xi.

¹⁸ Keenan, introduction to Graham, *Josef Fuchs on Natural Law*, xii. Perhaps Fuchs's influence on moral theologians explains why, during the time of Keenan's studies in Rome, eight of the nine Jesuits at Keenan's residence who refused to obey the

permission enabled Fuchs—who appropriated Karl Rahner’s emphasis on human subjectivity and transcendence by coining concepts such as “basic freedom” and “fundamental option”¹⁹—to significantly influence not only the future of moral theology but also the thought of his prolific protégé.²⁰

It is likely that Keenan’s interest in Lottin’s theory is partially a consequence of his affection for his mentor combined with the desire to exonerate him and other thinkers whom Michael Sherwin labels “theologians of moral motivation.”²¹ Indeed if Lottin was correct that the later Thomas was a voluntarist of sorts who attributed both final and efficient causality to the will,²² Keenan may be justified in his efforts to maintain that the Angelic Doctor ultimately developed “a theology of moral motivation similar to the one advanced by Fuchs and his disciples.”²³ Understandably, then, Keenan strove to build upon Lottin’s thesis by positing the existence “of the distinction between goodness and rightness”²⁴ in the later writings of Aquinas in addition to assertions to the effect that “antecedent willingness” necessarily precedes the reason²⁵ in a kind of precognitive motion toward the good.

Regardless of what his motivations may or may not have been, Keenan’s claim is clear: during Aquinas’s second Parisian regency, “precisely while writing *De malo* 6 and question nine of the *Prima secundae*,” Thomas “develop[ed] a new position concerning the will’s autonomy.”²⁶ Since Keenan considers this autonomy to be “a necessary condition for under-

Pope and wear clericals were moralists.

¹⁹ Fuchs himself attributes these concepts and terms to Rahner (Josef Fuchs, “Good Acts and Good Persons,” in *John Paul II and Moral Theology: Readings in Moral Theology No. 10*, edited by Charles E. Curran and Richard A. McCormick, S.J. [New York: Paulist Press, 1998], 47; cited in Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love*, 6).

²⁰ Keenan, introduction to Graham, *Josef Fuchs on Natural Law*, x.

²¹ Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love*, xix.

²² Lottin, *Psychologie et morale*, 1:222: “It is therefore the will that will simultaneously play both the role of efficient cause and that of final cause; and to reason will be ascribed the role of formal cause.”

²³ See Sherwin, *By Knowledge and By Love*, 11.

²⁴ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 34.

²⁵ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 50. On 7, he argues that “in contemporary moral theology, goodness is not consequent to rightness, but antecedent to and distinct from rightness.” He repeats this assertion on 15, adding, “goodness describes striving and is antecedent to rightness.” For him, “insofar as the will first exercises itself, it is not moved by an object” (43).

²⁶ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 9.

standing moral goodness,”²⁷ Thomas’s “reversal”²⁸ is key. We will be considering the arguments he provides in defense of this “reversal” throughout the present article, but one of the more salient ones merits mention here. Keenan observes that neither *De malo*, q. 6, nor ST I-II, q. 9, (both written ca. 1270) repeat the assertion of *De Veritate* (1256–1259²⁹) that “the will is a passive power”³⁰ even though they are treating the same subject matter. Keenan, who obviously separates himself from this idea since he thinks the first exercise of the will is always prior to any intellectual specification,³¹ maintains that the earlier Thomas was led astray regarding the will’s passivity precisely because of the notion that the intellect is a final cause. For Keenan, “if reason is the final cause . . . the will is a passive power, and reason alone explains freedom.”³² There are, then, two primary questions that arise. (1) Did Thomas initially maintain and subsequently abandon a teaching that the will is passive? (2) Did he ultimately abandon his teaching pertaining to the reason’s or intellect’s³³ final causality in order to make

²⁷ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, ix–x.

²⁸ “The arguments in the *Prima secundae* constitute a reversal of Thomas’s earlier position on the will” (Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 41).

²⁹ Dated by Jean-Pierre Torrell, O.P. to 1256–1259; see *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, vol. 1, *The Person and His Work*, rev. ed., trans. Robert Royal (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 62.

³⁰ *De veritate*, q. 22, a. 12, obj. 3 (“the will is a passive power”) and ad 3: “the intellect moves by way of an end [*per modum finis*]; for it is in this way that the intellect is related to the apprehended good and the will.” Lauer says, “St. Thomas does not deny the minor proposition that the *voluntas est potentia passiva*” (“St. Thomas’s Theory,” 307). She initially considers the possibility that Lottin could have been correct that “assigning a role of final causality to the intellect would make it impossible to call the will an active power,” however, she ends up demonstrating that “St. Thomas does not consider a final causality on the part of the intellect as detrimental to the will’s active nature” (314).

³¹ See Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 47: “As first mover, the will’s movement is independent of and prior to reason’s presentation of the object.” On 148 and elsewhere, he speaks of exercise as preceding specification. This is because Keenan believes that “formal interior acts” are “antecedent to questions concerning specification” (142).

³² Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 29. Two pages later, he says something similar: “Thomas’s premise that the will is a passive power is a[n] . . . effect that results from the identification of the presented object with final causality.”

³³ Although the reason and intellect are distinguished because the intellect pertains to simple apprehension and the reason to a dialectical process of ratiocination, they are often spoken of as synonymous. Aquinas does so by saying, “reason or intellect” in many places (e.g., *ST* I, q. 21, a. 2, ad 1; I-II, q. 13, a. 1, corp.; I-II, q. 62, a. 3, corp.). See also, *In I eth.*, lec. 1, no. 8, and *ST* I-II, q. 58, a. 3, corp.

room for some kind of autonomy of the will?³⁴

When we evaluate Thomas's statements about the relationship of the intellect and will before and after the supposedly "significant shift"³⁵ in Aquinas' thought, it will serve us well to have these two questions in mind. Before doing so, however, we will consider whether such a shift would even be conceivable.

Could Thomas Have Radically Changed His Mind?

Though those who know Aquinas' writings well would rightly be reticent to concur with a claim that he would *reverse* his position, it is at least conceivable that he would do so in obedience to ecclesiastical authority. It is true that Thomas maintains that "the argument based upon authority" is weakest when it is merely "based upon human reason," but he insists that this kind of argument is strongest when it is based upon revealed principles,³⁶ and it is certainly possible to view ecclesiastical censures in this way. It even seems likely Thomas would have viewed them in this way because despite his somewhat nuanced position on this point, it is clear he thought the "precepts of a prelate" could be "considered as precepts of God" in regard to certain particular judgments.³⁷ Even if a significant shift would have been a possibility, however, one might rightly ask whether the condemnations would have been particular enough to cause Thomas to re-evaluate his thinking. In other words, were the Parisian condemnations of 1270 written in such a way that they could lead to a transition away from an Aristotelian mindset that some consider to be intellectually deterministic and toward a more radically voluntaristic notion of freedom³⁸—or not? To answer this, we should consider that these condemnations were essen-

³⁴ See Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 44: "By designating reason's presentation of the object as the formal cause of the specific act of the will, Thomas has an argument to support his assertions that the will is autonomous." Similarly, he argues that, if we were to "describe the causal effect of reason's presentation of the object as final, we [would] ultimately preclude the will's accountability" (28).

³⁵ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 41.

³⁶ See, *ST* q. 1, a. 8, ad 2.

³⁷ See *ST* II-II, q. 104, a. 5, ad 2, and I-II, q. 104, a. 5 obj. 2 and ad 2. Although Thomas grants in this latter article that an inferior need not obey a superior if the latter's power does not extend to a certain particular, he affirms the authority of prelates in general. Thus in the third reply, he says one who perfectly obeys does so in *all* lawful things. He also speaks of the need for spiritual prelates to make determinations in matters pertaining to the common good in I-II, q. 108, a. 2.

³⁸ Denis J. M. Bradley, "Reason and the Natural Law: Flannery's Reconstruction of Aquinas's Moral Theory," *The Thomist* 67 (2003): 123–24.

tially directed against four particular ideas promoted by the so-called³⁹ Averroists. Jean-Pierre Torrell lists them as follows: “the eternity of the world, the denial of God’s universal providence, unicity of the intellectual soul for all men (or monopsychism), and determinism.”⁴⁰ It is this last error that concerns us. Keenan adverts our attention to the relevant theses condemned by Bishop Stephen Tempier by saying:

Two of the condemned theses concern the will: (1) that the will is a passive power and not an active one, and (2) that the will necessarily wishes what it chooses. These theses are explicitly critiqued in Thomas’s *De malo* 6. The title of *De malo* 6 echoes one thesis and an objection echoes another.⁴¹

If Aquinas had, in fact, meant to imply in his earlier writings that the will is entirely and unqualifiedly passive and that the will is “necessarily moved by the desirable object,”⁴² he may well have been forced to alter his position. To determine whether he would have held these positions, however, we need to peruse the texts. We will begin with those written prior to 1270 and subsequently evaluate what changes may or may not have occurred.

The Will Prior to 1270

The early Aquinas certainly tended to strongly emphasize the dependence of the will upon the reason. Indeed, in the years prior to the purported shift, he considers the will to be the appetite which follows the intellect⁴³

³⁹ For some sources indicating Averroes himself was not an Averroist and that this is a false predication, see Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:192–94.

⁴⁰ Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:336.

⁴¹ Keenan (*Goodness and Rightness*, 40) links “Whether man has free choice over his actions, or chooses from necessity, with the third condemned thesis, which asserted that “man’s will wills or chooses out of necessity.” He also links *De malo*, q. 6, obj 7 (“The will is a passive power and to will is to undergo; . . . therefore, it seems that the will is moved out of necessity by the desirable object”) with the ninth condemned thesis asserting that “free will [*liberum arbitrium*] is a passive power, not an active one; and that it is moved out of necessity from the desirable object.” For the condemnations in Latin, see H. Denifle and A. Chatelain, *Char-tularium universitatis parisiensis*, vol. 1 (Paris: Frairs Delalain, 1889), 486–87. Interestingly, in one manuscript, the words “not an active one” (*non activa*) do not appear (see Flannery, *Acts amid Precepts*, 112n1).

⁴² This is a better translation of “necessitate movetur ab appetibili” than Keenan’s “necessarily wishes what it chooses.”

⁴³ Aquinas, *Compendium theologiae* I, ch. 1 (ca. 1267; see Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:164–65).

because the act of the rational appetite that is known as the will is “nothing other than a certain inclination following an *understood* form.”⁴⁴ In the commentary on the *Sentences* of Lombard (known as the *Scriptum* and dated to 1255–1266 by Torrell⁴⁵), Aquinas speaks to the way this occurs in regard to foundational principles of action. Presupposing a distinction between *liberum arbitrium* (“free judgment” or “free will,” which is indifferently related to choosing well or badly⁴⁶) and the *voluntas ut natura* (“will as nature” or “simple will,” i.e., the *voluntas* inasmuch as it is inclined toward something for its own sake⁴⁷), he says:

The will as nature . . . follows the judgment of the reason because there is something in the reason that is naturally known as an indemonstrable principle in practical matters which is related [to the will as nature] in the manner of an end—because in practical matters, the end holds the place of the beginning. Accordingly, that which is the end of man is naturally known in the reason to be good and desired and the will that follows this is called the will as nature.⁴⁸

In other words, the will as nature follows the natural reason / reason as nature⁴⁹ when it proposes an end that is known to be good and desired

⁴⁴ *ST* I, q. 87, a. 4, corp. (pre-1270): “Actus voluntatis nihil aliud est, quam inclinatio quaedam consequens formam intellectam” (emphasis added). Powers, of course, are distinguished by their acts (and objects) as *ST* I, q. 77, a. 3, makes clear.

⁴⁵ See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:328.

⁴⁶ See *In II sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 1, corp.: “Free will [*liberum arbitrium*], though, is related to the act of choice as that by which a certain act is sometimes good, sometimes bad, and sometimes indifferent. Accordingly, it does not seem to designate some kind of habit if habit is taken properly. Instead [it designates] that power whose act is properly to choose” (dated to 1255–1266 by Torrell [*Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:328]). Also see two other pre-1270 texts in *ST*: I, q. 19, a. 8, sc; I, q. 83, a. 2, corp.

⁴⁷ See: *In III sent.*, d. 17, q. 1, a. 1, qc. 3, ad 1; *ST* III q. 18, a. 3, corp.; and John Damascene’s *On the Orthodox Faith* 2.22 and 3.14–18.

⁴⁸ *In II sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2: “voluntas ut . . . natura . . . sequitur iudicium rationis: quia in ratione est aliquid naturaliter cognitum quasi principium indemonstrabile in operabilibus, quod se habet per modum finis, quia in operabilibus finis habet locum principii, ut in 6 *Ethic.* dicitur. Unde illud quod finis est hominis, est naturaliter in ratione cognitum esse bonum et appetendum, et voluntas consequens istam cognitionem dicitur voluntas ut natura.”

⁴⁹ Martin Rhonheimer rightly equates “natural reason” and “reason as nature” in “Nature as Reason: A Thomistic Theory of Natural Law,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 19, no. 3 (2006): 357–78, at 361. “Reason as nature” refers to reason

(*appetendum*) for its own sake. Moreover, since in practical affairs, the “end holds the place of the beginning,” an end of this sort will necessarily be a principle of action. Worded differently, it will be related to the rational appetite *per modum finis* or “in the manner of an end.”⁵⁰

Speaking of the will in general, Thomas’s teaching at this time was that the “good, which is the end,” is the object of the will.⁵¹ As a consequence, the end has such a strong influence upon it that the will is “principally described” by that which “has the *ratio* of the good by its very essence (*per se*),” namely, the end.⁵² The moment an unmitigated good is intellectually apprehended as such, the will goes after it as an end. Something that may potentially be desired for the sake of the end (i.e., as a means), however, has to participate in this *ratio* in virtue of the reason—which alone is capable of ordering the will toward the end as an object of pursuit.⁵³

Rosemary Lauer perceptively explains Thomas’s teaching at this time by saying he thought of the intellect as moving the will “mediately through the object, insofar as it is because of the ordering intellect that the object is understood to partake of the nature of the will’s end.”⁵⁴ In other words, the intellect moves the will, but only by pointing in some way to the end it is naturally ordered toward. In the *Summa contra gentiles* [SCG] (ca. 1259–1265⁵⁵), this moving property of the intellect is described in a way that complements this understanding while providing further detail:

First and *per se*, the intellect moves the will because the will, as such, is moved by its object, which is the apprehended good. For the will moves the intellect *per accidens* inasmuch as the act of understanding is apprehended as a good and is thus desired by the will, from which it follows that the intellect understands in act. And in this [act of understanding] itself, the intellect precedes the will: for

“inasmuch as it knows something naturally” without dialectical reasoning. See *De Veritate*, q. 16 a. 1 c. It is a natural habit also known as natural reason or synderesis (see II-II, q. 47 a. 6 ad 1).

⁵⁰ *In II sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2.

⁵¹ *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 13, corp.: “bonum, quod est finis . . . est obiectum voluntatis.” Similarly, the *sed contra* refers to this object as “the good and the end” (“bonum et finis est obiectum voluntatis”).

⁵² *In II sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3: “Each power is defined from that which is its *per se* object—and formally. Since, however, the object of the will is the good, it is for this reason described from the end because it is related *per se* to the notion of the good.”

⁵³ See *In II sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3.

⁵⁴ Lauer, “St. Thomas’s Theory,” 305.

⁵⁵ See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:96–117.

the will would never desire to understand unless the intellect first apprehended understanding itself as a good. And again, the will moves the intellect for doing things in act in the way an agent is said to move. The intellect, however, moves the will in the way an end moves because the good understood is the end of the will; the agent, however, comes later in moving than the end because the agent does not move except on account of the end. For this reason, it is apparent that the intellect is simply higher than the will.⁵⁶

At least at this point in time, then, Keenan is certainly correct that St. Thomas was far from thinking of the will in terms of autonomy. He also would have unequivocally rejected the idea that the first exercise of the will is always prior to any intellectual specification.⁵⁷ If Keenan were correct that Aquinas changed his mind on both these points, Thomas would have to be said to have radically reversed this thought. As I hope to demonstrate in the pages to follow, however, the evidence for such a change is tenuous at best.

The *Quaestiones disputatae de veritate* (1256–1259)⁵⁸ provide further insight into the thought of Thomas during this pre-1270 time period. He says there that the reason for acting (*ratio agendi*) is provided by the intel-

⁵⁶ Aquinas, *Summa Contra Gentiles* [SCG] III ch. 26, no. 22: “Quod autem quinta ratio proponit, voluntatem esse altiore intellectus, quasi eius motivam, falsum esse manifestum est. Nam primo et per se intellectus movet voluntatem: voluntas enim, in quantum huiusmodi, movetur a suo obiecto, quod est bonum apprehensum. Voluntas autem movet intellectum quasi per accidens, in quantum scilicet intelligere ipsum apprehenditur ut bonum, et sic desideratur a voluntate, ex quo sequitur quod intellectus actu intelligit. Et in hoc ipso intellectus voluntatem praecedat: nunquam enim voluntas desideraret intelligere nisi prius intellectus ipsum intelligere apprehenderet ut bonum. Et iterum, voluntas movet intellectum ad operandum in actu per modum quo agens movere dicitur; intellectus autem voluntatem per modum quo finis movet, nam bonum intellectus est finis voluntatis; agens autem est posterior in movendo quam finis, nam agens non movet nisi propter finem. Unde apparet intellectum simpliciter esse altiore voluntate.”

⁵⁷ See, Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 47: “As first mover, the will’s movement is independent of and prior to reason’s presentation of the object.” On 148 and elsewhere, Keenan speaks of exercise as preceding specification. This is because Keenan believes that “formal interior acts” are “antecedent to questions concerning specification” (142).

⁵⁸ Dated by Torrell to 1256–1259 (*Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:62).

lect,⁵⁹ which implies that the will is ruled by its judgment.⁶⁰ Once again, the Common Doctor explains this dynamic in terms of final causality:

The end . . . properly preexists in the mover according to the intellect, to which it pertains to receive something intentionally [*per modum intentionis*] . . . Accordingly, the intellect moves the will in the manner by which an end is said to move, namely, inasmuch as it preconceives the *ratio* of the end and proposes it to the will. But to move in the manner of an efficient cause [*causae agentis*] pertains to the will and not to the intellect.⁶¹

Interestingly, the will is still clearly thought to be an efficient cause despite the intellect acting in the manner of an end. For both Lottin⁶² and Keenan,⁶³ speaking of the intellect in this way precludes the possibility that the will can be free as it implies intellectual determinism. For the early Thomas, however, this was certainly not the case even though the “whole root of freedom” is strikingly said to be located in reason.⁶⁴

How can this be? How could the intellect “move in the manner in which an end moves (since the understood good is the end of the will)”⁶⁵ while the will acts efficiently and retains some kind of freedom? If the end is the “beginning of human actions”⁶⁶ and that for the sake of which

⁵⁹ *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 12, corp.: “The reason for acting (*ratio agendi*) is the form of the agent by which the agent acts; it is necessary, therefore, for it to be in the agent for the agent to act. . . . The end, therefore, properly preexists in the mover according to the intellect” (dated by Torrell to 1256–1259; see *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:62).

⁶⁰ In the *Scriptum*, in fact, he explicitly spoke of the will being ruled by the “judgment of the will”: “Sin is said to be in the reason on account of the will, which is ruled by the judgment of the reason” (*In II sent.*, d. 24, q. 3, a. 3, corp.).

⁶¹ *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 12, corp.: “Et ideo finis praexistit in movente proprie secundum intellectum, cuius est recipere aliquid per modum intentionis, et non secundum esse naturae. Unde intellectus movet voluntatem per modum quo finis movere dicitur, in quantum scilicet praeconcepit rationem finis, et eam voluntati proponit. Sed movere per modum causae agentis est voluntatis, et non intellectus.”

⁶² Lottin argues Thomas decided to ascribe formal causality alone to the will to avoid the psychological determinism that would be implied if final causality were attributed to it instead. See Lauer, “St. Thomas’s Theory,” 4, and Lottin, *Psychologie et morale*, 1:254.

⁶³ See Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 33.

⁶⁴ See *De ver.*, q. 24, a. 2, corp.

⁶⁵ *SCG* III, ch. 26, no. 22.

⁶⁶ “Principium humanorum actuum, in quantum sunt humani, est finis” This quote is from *ST* I-II, q. 1, a. 3, corp., and is thus antecedent to q. 9, the precise place Keenan says “Thomas shifts his description of the causal relation between reason and the will” (*Goodness and Rightness*, 38).

the will moves,⁶⁷ and if the intellect is that which appoints the end,⁶⁸ how did Thomas envision the will's freedom? A preliminary consideration is that Aquinas thought of the intellect as being a primary source of human freedom in general. For him, the intellect's ability to appoint the end enables the rational animal known as man to rise above mere instinct. As he explained in *De potentia* (1265–1266⁶⁹) and elsewhere, the gradation found among creatures is contingent upon the ability (or lack thereof) to determine their own practical ends for themselves,⁷⁰ which is something that can only occur in virtue of the intellect or reason.⁷¹ This, however, only explains that Thomas thought of man *qua* man as free in virtue of his reason. What about his will in particular?

Keenan criticizes the earlier works because he thinks the notion that “the whole root of freedom is located in reason”⁷² necessarily implies that Thomas “decisively identifies reason and *not the will* as the source of freedom.”⁷³ What Keenan appears to view as even worse is Thomas's description of reason's causality in a manner “similar to final causality,” as he thinks this essentially “precludes any autonomous movement of the will, because any movement is ultimately derived not from what is moved, but from the mover.”⁷⁴ We will consider these objections in turn.

The Root of Freedom

Regarding the question of the will's liberty in particular—and the related

⁶⁷ See *SCG* IV, ch. 97, which Torrell dates to ca. 1264–1265 (*Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:104).

⁶⁸ See, for instance, *In III sent.*, d. 33, q. 2, a. 5, corp., which is dated between 1255–1266 by Torrell (*Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:328), and in which we are told that humans, unlike irrational animals, must use their reason to appoint (*praestituere*) both the common and particular end to the virtues.

⁶⁹ See Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:328.

⁷⁰ *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 4, corp., speaks of the rational nature (as opposed to the insensible and sensitive nature) in terms of its ability to “incline or not incline” toward the desirable apprehended object. See also other passages where the basic division of creatures into two is into those who are able to determine their own actions and others who have it determined to them by another, since they do not have rational natures and thus cannot appoint it to themselves: *De pot.*, q. 1, a. 5, corp.; *De ver.*, q. 3, a. 1; *In I eth.*, lec. 9, no. 6; and *In II sent.*, d. 25, q. 1, a. 1, corp.

⁷¹ The intellect and the reason are one power (see, *ST* I, q. 79, a. 8, corp.). Thomas himself often speaks of them as synonyms; see *In I eth.*, lec. 1, no. 8, and *ST* I-II, q. 58, a. 3, corp.

⁷² *De ver.*, q. 24, a. 2, corp.: “totius libertatis radix est in ratione constituta”; see also Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 32.

⁷³ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 31–32 (emphasis added).

⁷⁴ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 23.

issue pertaining to the degree to which it is or is not passive—the early Aquinas unequivocally argued the root of liberty is found in the reason⁷⁵ and that the will's very nature is to follow that which it apprehends.⁷⁶ Indeed, the “will as nature” follows whatever is “known in the reason to be good and desired.”⁷⁷ He did not, however, see any contradiction between this fact and the reality of free will. As he argued in the *SCG*, “all intellectual beings have free will [*liberam voluntatem*]” precisely because of the judgment of the intellect, which enables them to transcend impulsive behaviors. This judgment, moreover, encapsulates what it means to have free will (*liberum arbitrium*)—which he notably defines as “the free judgment of reason.”⁷⁸ We should note, however, that when Keenan argues Thomas had “decisively identif[ied] reason and *not the will* as the source of freedom,”⁷⁹ he overlooks the fact that Thomas also explicitly argued in *De veritate* that the will is a root of liberty.⁸⁰ In a sense, this should be no surprise because even though the will *as nature* (i.e., the simple will) is necessarily ordered to things such as “the last end, happiness and whatever things are included in happiness such as being and the knowledge of truth” (though without coercion⁸¹), Thomas insists that the will *as will* is the master of its own acts.⁸²

Thomas never thought there was any need to posit competitive causality between intellectual and volitional liberty. Indeed, they are both roots of freedom even though one of the roots must necessarily be rooted in the other for there to be anything other than a mere parody of true freedom. What seems implied in all this is the later teaching of the *prima secundae*, according to which, “the will is the root of freedom as its subject, but reason is the root as a cause.”⁸³ At the very least, he clearly thought of the

⁷⁵ *De ver.*, q. 24, a. 2, corp.: “The root of the whole of liberty is constituted in the reason.”

⁷⁶ *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 4.

⁷⁷ *In II sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2: “Whence that which is the end of man is naturally known in the reason to be good and desired—and the will following this knowledge is called the ‘will as nature.’”

⁷⁸ *SCG* II, ch. 48 (emphasis added).

⁷⁹ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 31–32 (emphasis added).

⁸⁰ *De ver.*, q. 23, a. 1, sc 4: “voluntas est radix libertatis.”

⁸¹ *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 5, corp. Parenthetically, Bernard Lonergan thought Thomas later abandoned his teaching about the will's freedom pertaining to non-coercion, but Flannery shows this is not the case (*Acts Amid Precepts*, 117).

⁸² *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 5, reply to the seventh difficulty to the contrary: “It is proper to the will, inasmuch as it is the will, that it be the master of its own actions.”

⁸³ *ST* I-II, q. 17, a. 1, ad 2: “Radix libertatis est voluntas sicut subiectum, sed sicut causa, est ratio.”

will, which he insisted was “related indifferently” to all mitigated goods,⁸⁴ as being a source of man’s freedom. In addition, the will itself was considered free in regard to its act, its object, and the order of the object to the end.⁸⁵ This means the will is not only able to choose freely regarding subordinate ends, but even in regard to ends such as happiness and being—at least inasmuch as the will can refrain from efficiently moving the intellect to consider these things in act.⁸⁶ One might wonder, though: is this freedom really possible if the intellect acts in the manner of an end?

Final Causality and Freedom

Many texts affirming the will’s passivity are found in Thomas’s earlier years when he tended to speak of the intellect in terms of final causality. Accordingly, in the *prima pars*, the intellect is said to be compared to the will (i.e., the intellective power) as that which moves.⁸⁷ The will is referred to as an “intellective appetite,”⁸⁸ and the nature of any appetite requires that it be a *moved* mover. Though it is superior to the sensitive appetite, it remains a “passive power” (*potentia passiva*)⁸⁹ that relies upon the intellect:

That which is first simply and according to the order of nature is more perfect. For this reason, act is prior to potency. In this way, the intellect is prior to the will as the mover is prior to the movable and as the active is prior to the passive; for the understood good moves the will.⁹⁰

⁸⁴ *De ver.*, q. 24, a. 14, corp.: “But the will of man is not determined to some one action, but is related indifferently to many.” Unsurprisingly, he says much the same about the free will (*liberum arbitrium*) at this time; *ST I* q. 83, a. 2, ad 1, for instance, says, “those things, however, to which we are naturally inclined, are not subject to free will. . . . Free will is indifferently related to choosing well or badly.” See also: *In II sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 1, corp.; *ST I*, q. 19, a. 8, sc.

⁸⁵ *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 6, corp.

⁸⁶ *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 6, corp.: “[The will] is able, in regard to the determined object, to make use of its own act when it wills or does not will to make use of it; for it is able to proceed to an act of willing in respect to anything, or to not proceed.” For the will’s efficient causality, see *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 12.

⁸⁷ *ST I*, q. 83, a. 4, ad 3: “Intellectus comparatur ad voluntatem, ut movens.”

⁸⁸ See: *ST I*, q. 80, a. 2; q. 82, a. 5, obj. 3; and the later I-II, q. 31, a. 4, corp.: “appetitus intellectivus, qui dicitur voluntas.”

⁸⁹ See *ST I* q. 80, a. 2, corp.

⁹⁰ *ST I*, q. 82, a. 3, ad 2: “Illud, quod est prius simpliciter, et secundum naturae ordinem, est perfectius: sic enim actus est prior potentia. Et hoc modo intellectus est prior voluntate, sicut motivum mobili, et activum passivo: bonum enim intellectum movet voluntatem.”

By tending to think of the intellect as enabling the will to intend the end in the first place (since the end must be cognized intellectually for it to be willed⁹¹), Thomas certainly thought of the will in passive terms to a certain extent. Lauer explains his reasoning at this time by observing that:

The intellect moves the will inasmuch as the intellect apprehends the object . . . as having the *ratio* of good, which is the final cause of the will, and orders the object to the ultimate end of the will. The will acts according to this order, or specifying principle, imposed upon it by the intellect.⁹²

An important, question, however, is whether the “finality” of the intellect necessitates the passivity of the will, and on this point, Lauer insists here that the answer is no: “Thomas does not consider a final causality on the part of the intellect as detrimental to the will’s active nature.” Kevin Flannery rightly echoes this sentiment.⁹³ Two texts from the *prima pars* are instructive on this point. First, in question 82, the intellect is said to move the agent in the manner of a final cause (*per modum finis*) even though the will moves all the powers of the soul to their acts in the manner of an efficient cause.⁹⁴ Secondly, in question 77, a power is said to be active when its object is compared to it “as a term or end,” which implies, Lauer notes, that the will is in some way active. After all, the apprehended object is often described as the end of the will.⁹⁵

Lauer seems correct when she goes on to suggest the will, for the early Thomas, must be both active and passive. Thomas himself says there is no need to distinguish an active and a passive component⁹⁶ in the will and perhaps one reason for this is that it is both active and passive. In keeping with question 77, we can say it is active to the degree it moves itself toward

⁹¹ As *ST* I, q. 87, a. 4, corp., words it, an act of the will is an inclination following after an *understood* form (“actus voluntatis nihil aliud est, quam inclinatio quaedam consequens formam intellectam”).

⁹² Lauer, “St. Thomas’s Theory,” 318.

⁹³ See Flannery, *Acts amid Precepts*, 115n12.

⁹⁴ See *ST* I, q. 82, a. 4; see also Lauer, “St. Thomas’s Theory,” 313.

⁹⁵ The end is the proper object of the will. See: *ST* I-II, q. 18, a. 6, corp.; a. 7, corp.; II-II, q. 8, a. 8, corp.; q. 110, a. 1, corp.; q. 122, a. 2, corp.

⁹⁶ *ST* I, q. 83, a. 4, obj. 3: “The will is an intellective appetite; but there are two powers on the part of the intellect; namely, the agent and the passive [*possibilis*].” He responds in ad 3: “It is not necessary to distinguish in the will an active and a passive [*possibile*].” The standard translation of *possibile* is “passive” here, and though many qualifications could be made, I have chosen to go along with the custom, as “possible” could lead to confusion without extensive explanation.

its term or end and passive inasmuch as its object acts as a *causa movens*—a moving cause.⁹⁷ This helps explain why the early Thomas insists the intellect moves the will in one way while the will moves the intellect and all the powers of the soul—and as an efficient cause—in another.⁹⁸

It seems undeniable, then that even though the early Thomas tended to speak of the intellect as acting in the manner of a final cause (though not exclusively⁹⁹), he did not think this fact eliminates free will. For this reason, he insisted that the intellect does *not* “move according to the manner of an efficient cause” and that it merely moves the will “by proposing to it its object, which is the end.”¹⁰⁰ It is the will “and not the intellect” which acts in the manner of an efficient cause,¹⁰¹ and since the influence of an efficient cause consists in its activity (i.e., the *opposite* of passivity), it must be active in some way.¹⁰² Accordingly, he sometimes went so far as to describe the will as an active power, and he even considered it to be superior to the intellect regarding its ability to effect change.¹⁰³

These facts make it unlikely Aquinas would have considered himself compelled to change his teaching in view of Tempier’s 1270 insistence

⁹⁷ *ST* I, q. 77, a. 3, corp., ad: “Objectum autem comparatur ad actum potentiae passivae, sicut principium, et causa movens.” It is certainly passive in a way, then, because a few questions later we learn that the “intellectus comparatur ad voluntatem, ut movens” (*ST* I, q. 83 a. 4, ad 2).

⁹⁸ See *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 12, sc 2, and the body of the article.

⁹⁹ See Lauer, “St. Thomas’s Theory,” 304. As we have seen, the *ratio* of acting is called “the form of the agent by which the agent acts” in *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 12, corp., and *ratio* and *intellectus* are often considered synonymous (see: *ST* I, q. 21, a. 2, ad 1; I-II, q. 13, a. 1, corp.) and may be in this case, as well—which means *intellectus*/understanding would exert formal causality. As Lauer says, “since it is necessary that the form be in the agent, the intellect is also a formal cause inasmuch as it informs the agent” (“St. Thomas’s Theory,” 307; see also 304). Finally, in *SCG* II, ch. 47, the possible intellect is said to be the most formal thing in man.

¹⁰⁰ *SCG* III, ch. 72, no. 7: “Intellectus, non secundum modum causae efficientis et moventis, sed secundum modum causae finalis, moveat voluntatem, proponendo sibi suum obiectum, quod est finis.”

¹⁰¹ *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 12, corp.: “Movere per modum causae agentis est voluntatis, et non intellectus.”

¹⁰² *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 2, corp.

¹⁰³ He refers to it as an active power in *SCG* III, ch. 56. Regarding its nobility, *De ver.*, q. 22, a. 11, ad sc 2, says, “the freedom of the will does not manifest it to be more noble simply speaking, but more noble in moving” (see also q. 14, a. 5, ad 5, which says, in part, “in moving or acting, the will is first,” and q. 22, a. 12, ad 5). Despite all this, the intellect, of course, retained superiority *simpliciter* (see *ST* I, q. 82, a. 3, ad 2, and a. 4, ad 3).

that the will is not entirely active.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, though the same bishop also addressed *liberum arbitrium* when condemning the proposition that it “is a passive power, not an active one and that it is necessarily moved by its object” (“quod liberum arbitrium est potentia passiva, non activa; et quod necessitate movetur ab appetibili”),¹⁰⁵ Thomas would not have fallen under censure on that point, either. As he had already made clear, free will / free judgment (*liberum arbitrium*) is “the cause of its *own* motion” as that which is “*indifferently* related to choosing well or badly.”¹⁰⁶

The intellect, then, exerts significant influence when considered as acting in the manner of a final cause, but its influence or causality is certainly not oppressive. One might even go beyond Lauer’s refusal to grant that “formal causality on the part of the intellect is less implicative of a passive will than is final causality”¹⁰⁷ and argue with Lawrence Dewan that formal causality actually implies a more robust causality on the side of the intellect, inasmuch as the intellect thereby has “its own universal formal character stressed.”¹⁰⁸ We will revisit this question in the next section. For now, the crucial consideration is a simple one: the early Thomas took pains to defend the freedom of the will even while describing it in terms of final causality.

Post-1270

Lottin and Keenan seem correct to say there were not any explicit affirmations that the intellect acts in the manner of a final cause in the last two years of Aquinas’ life and that he tended to speak of it in terms of formal causality instead. As this point is incontrovertible, the question that remains is whether this led to, or was tied up with, a teaching that the will’s movement is “independent of and prior to reason,” as Keenan would have us believe.¹⁰⁹ We will first discuss in further detail whether, despite the earlier Thomas’s understanding of the matter, the truth of things requires that, if the intellect acts as a kind of final cause, the will must be passive.

As mentioned above, Lauer and Dewan both reject the thesis that attributing formal causality to the intellect (instead of final causality)

¹⁰⁴ That it is not entirely active, we might note, is especially evident from the fact that the rational appetite known as the will is a moved *mover*—something he repeats often. See, for instance, *ST* I, q. 80, a. 2, corp.

¹⁰⁵ See Denifle and Chatelain, *Chartularium Universitatis Parisiensis*, 1:486–87.

¹⁰⁶ *ST* I, q. 83, a. 1, ad 3, and a. 2, corp.

¹⁰⁷ Lauer, “St. Thomas’s Theory,” 309.

¹⁰⁸ Lawrence Dewan, *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue: Essays in Thomistic Ethics* (New York: Fordham; University Press, 2007), 170.

¹⁰⁹ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 47.

would somehow leave the will more free to determine its own activity. For Dewan, the more mature Thomas actually stresses the intellect's "own universal formal character" and "*omnipresent* determination" by speaking of its formal causality.¹¹⁰ This seems correct. Aquinas accepts Aristotle's explanation of a formal cause in terms of "the essence and what it was to be" (ἡ/τὴν οὐσία/ν καὶ τὸ τί ἦν εἶναι [*hē/tēn ousia/n kai to ti ēn einai*]) of a thing,¹¹¹ so a formal cause must have an all-pervading influence. It would not, however, necessarily have this if it were to act only in the manner of an end (*per modum finis*), because if it were to do so, one might think the intellect merely appoints the end and then leaves the will to its own devices. Speaking of it in terms of formality precludes this mistaken notion by making it more likely for us to understand that the intellect informs the rational appetite not only by presenting first principles to it but also by formally specifying it during any particular act performed for the sake of those principles. Interestingly, Flannery points out that in the commentary on the *Metaphysics* of Aristotle (which Torrell dates between 1270 and 1272) and in *SCG* (ca. 1259–1265) Thomas appears to link formal causality to efficient causality due the potent nature of the former.¹¹² This is striking because final causality, on the contrary, is frequently sharply distinguished from efficient causality.¹¹³

Turning now to the role of the will, the later Thomas is clear that *some* acts of the will are prior to *some* acts of the intellect. Nevertheless, "*every* act of the will proceeds from some act of the intellect, . . . for the will tends to the final act of the intellect."¹¹⁴ Since the will "follows the apprehension of the reason or intellect inasmuch as the *ratio* of the good is apprehended,"¹¹⁵ the intellect certainly retains some kind of necessary connection with final causality. It does so only to the degree it exerts causality through

¹¹⁰ Dewan, *Wisdom, Law, and Virtue*, 170.

¹¹¹ Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1.3.983a35 (this passage contains the accusative; the nominative is used in 12.9.1075a2), in *Aristotle's Metaphysics*, ed. W. D. Ross (Medford, MA: Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924). See also Aquinas's commentary on that passage in *In I metaphys.*, as well as *In VII metaphys.*, lec. 13 (on *Metaphysics* 7.13.1038b14; "that which was to be . . . pertains to the form"), and *In V metaphys.*, lec. 2, no. 764.

¹¹² See: Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas*, 1:232 and 1:96–117; Flannery, *Acts amid Precepts*, 115n2; Aquinas, *In V metaphys.*, lec. 2, nos. 766–70; *SCG* II, ch. 48.

¹¹³ *SCG* III, ch. 72, no. 7.

¹¹⁴ See *ST*, I-II, q. 4, a. 4, ad 2, and *In II sent.*, d. 39, q. 2, a. 2, ad 2.

¹¹⁵ *ST* I-II, q. 19, a. 10, corp.: "Voluntas sequatur apprehensionem rationis vel intellectus secundum quod ratio boni apprehensi."

the medium of the object when it perceives the *ratio* of the good in the object, but it does do so.

The intellect, then, *always* precedes the will on some level even if “some act” of the will is prior to some particular act of the intellect. Thomas gives the example of when someone initially judges as if “by speculating through principles” that committing fornication with a woman is wrong even though he goes on to choose otherwise.¹¹⁶ Since choice pertains to the same power as the will,¹¹⁷ this means his will intervenes to cause his reason to instead think about the “delight of fornication.”¹¹⁸ Now, for Keenan, one of the ways the later Thomas supposedly makes use of “even more significant forms of expression to highlight the independence of the will’s efficiency” is by coming to argue that the will is “*the* principle of movement.”¹¹⁹ If Thomas did go on to do so, we might concur with Keenan that the “strivings” of the will are “antecedent to questions of intention and choice.”¹²⁰ However, the later Aquinas is also clear that, even if the appetite is a principle of action,¹²¹ the foundational principle is reason. Actually, it is remarkable that Keenan neglects to mention that his proof text pertaining to the will being a principle of movement is immediately followed by the qualification: “*nevertheless* according to the command and direction of the reason.”¹²²

Time and again, Thomas is clear that the ultimate principle of movement is the intellect,¹²³ which “absolutely and of itself [*secundum se*] precedes the will as moving it.”¹²⁴ The will’s very nature is to tend “toward

¹¹⁶ See *De ver.*, q. 17, a. 1, ad 4.

¹¹⁷ See *ST I*, q. 83, a. 4, ad 2.

¹¹⁸ See, *De ver.*, q. 17, a. 1, ad 4.

¹¹⁹ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 45, emphasis added. See, *ST II-II*, q. 47, a. 9, ad 1.

¹²⁰ Keenan, *Goodness and Rightness*, 142. For further explanation of this quote, see Sherwin, *By Knowledge and Love*, 14.

¹²¹ *ST I-II*, q. 58, a. 3, corp.: “The principle of human actions is only in man in a twofold way; namely, in his intellect or reason and in his appetite; for these are the two moving powers in man.” See also *In I eth.*, lec. 1, no. 8.

¹²² *ST II-II*, q. 47, a. 9, ad 1: “Motus quidem pertinet ad vim appetitivam, sicut ad principium movens.”

¹²³ *ST I-II*, q. 100, a. 1, corp.: “reason . . . is the proper principle of human acts.” See also *De malo*, q. 10, a. 2, corp.; *ST I-II*, q. 68, a. 1, corp.; q. 90, a. 2, corp.; a. 1, corp.; q. 18, a. 8, corp.; q. 104, a. 1, ad 3.

¹²⁴ *De virtutibus*, q. 1, a. 7, corp.: “It should be known, though, that the intellect, both the speculative and the practical, can be perfected in two ways by a habit. In one way, absolutely and as such (*secundum se*) precedes the will as moving it.” It should be known, though, that the intellect, both the speculative and the practical, can be

that which is judged by the reason"¹²⁵ and the "intellect apprehends the end before the will does."¹²⁶ In other words, the will "follows the apprehension of the reason or the intellect,"¹²⁷ since the "appetite for the fitting end presupposes the right apprehension of the end, which comes through reason."¹²⁸ What this necessarily implies is that the will cannot be entirely active. Understandably, then, the later Thomas explicitly says the will is "both passive and active."¹²⁹ This exact phrase is, in fact, lacking in the earlier texts. To some extent, then, there may be a slight alteration of emphasis, but as we saw in the last section, the earlier Thomas also seemed to at least imply that the will was also passive to some extent.¹³⁰

Conclusion

We must conclude that when it comes to the claim that Thomas had a voluntarist turn around the beginning of the *prima pars* (at the time he wrote *De malo*, q. 6), there is hardly a scintilla of evidence. Actually, even the *De malo* text argues that "the will wills nothing except under the *ratio* of the good."¹³¹ This *ratio* had earlier been described as coming about through the influence of the "ordering reason"¹³² and nothing substantial has changed. No doubt, the manner of explaining the intellect's causality

perfected in two ways by a habit. In one way, absolutely and as such [*secundum se*] . . ."

¹²⁵ St I-II, q. 74, a. 7, ad 1: "Voluntas tendit in id quod est ratione iudicatum."

¹²⁶ ST I-II, q. 3, a. 4, ad 3: "Finem primo apprehendit intellectus, quam voluntas."

¹²⁷ ST I-II, q. 19, a. 10, corp.: "Voluntas sequatur apprehensionem rationis, vel intellectus."

¹²⁸ ST I-II, q. 19, a. 3, ad 2: "To the second it should be said that the Philosopher is speaking there about the practical intellect inasmuch as it takes counsel and reasons discursively about means (for in this way it perfects prudence); now in regard to means, the rectitude of the reason consists in the conformity to the appetite for the fitting end; nevertheless, even the appetite itself presupposes the right apprehension of the fitting end, which comes about through reason."

¹²⁹ See: ST I-II, q. 77, a. 1, obj. 1 and ad 1; I-II, q. 50, a. 5, obj. 2 and ad 2.

¹³⁰ As quoted above, in ST I, q. 83, a. 4, obj. 3, he said, "The will is the intellectual appetite but there are two powers on the part of the intellect; namely the active and the passive," and in obj. 3, he responds, "It is not necessary to distinguish the agent and the passive."

¹³¹ *De malo*, q. 6, ad 6: "From the fact that the object of the will is the good, it can be held that the will wants nothing unless it be considered as good."

¹³² *In II sent.*, d. 24, q. 1, a. 3, ad 3: "That which is done for the sake of an end is not considered good solely on account of the end. It is rather considered to be good in view of how ordered it is towards the end. Nevertheless, to the degree that it participates in the notion [*ratio*] of the good, it is the object of the will, inasmuch as whatever is in the will pertains to the power of ordering reason."

changed to some extent, but Thomas does not appear to have changed his tune in order to make more room for volitional freedom. Sixty-four years ago, Lauer concluded her article by saying, “there does not seem to be sufficient evidence to warrant a categorical statement that Bishop Tempier succeeded in coercing St. Thomas to change either his mind or his teaching.”¹³³ I would go further by arguing there is not even evidence that he had St. Thomas in mind when he put forward the relevant condemnations. Furthermore, Thomas would not have had any reason to change his teaching because he always maintained the freedom of the will even while insisting on the primacy of the intellect. N.V

¹³³ Lauer, “St. Thomas’s Theory,” 319.